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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005976

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [CY](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET TO "YES" ON FINNS'
CYPRUS PROPOSAL

REF: A. NICOSIA 1768
[1](#)B. ANKARA 5436

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The GOT understands that it must put its best foot forward with respect to the Finnish package proposal on Cyprus, MFA D/US Apakan told Ambassador and EUR/SE director Silliman October 12. The Turks are asking for more precision on questions such as what constitutes direct trade and how Famagusta port would be administered. Varosha remains difficult, but Apakan did not say it was out of the question. Ambassador and Silliman strongly urged Turkey to work with the Finns and negotiate seriously in order to avoid a serious rupture with the EU later this year.
End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Apakan observed that the Finnish process remains informal and oral. He clearly preferred to keep it in informal channels, which box no one in and keep the process moving. He said that in a bilateral Monday with the Finns, on the margins of an EU-Troika meeting in Luxembourg, Turkey would elaborate on requests for clarification already conveyed to EU Enlargement Commissioner Rehn and his staff. He identified several items on which Turkey needs a better understanding.

--Direct Trade: What constitutes direct trade with the Turkish Cypriots and how will it be achieved? For the Turks, to be direct, the trade connection must be genuine and unimpeded. The Turkey-EU Customs Union Agreement deals only with goods, but what would be the status of trade in services, the investment right of establishment and the movement of persons -- all of which were considered for the Turkey-EU deal in 1995.

--Ports: What specifically is the plan for the EU's role on Famagusta? The Turkish understanding is that Famagusta port should be under Turkish Cypriot administration in cooperation with the EU, but that EU officials would only control EU-destined exports.

--Direct Flights: Recognizing that Ercan airport is a hot-button issue for the Greek Cypriots, Apakan said Turkey would nonetheless like to explore some kind of Ercan opening because of the economic boost charter flights would provide the TCs. The Turks have commissioned a UK legal report and believe there are no insuperable legal barriers; political barriers may prove more intractable.

--Varosha: Just as Ercan is difficult for the GCs, so is Varosha delicate for the Turks and TCs. For them, Varosha is, at heart, a comprehensive settlement issue. Talat's view is that Varosha can be opened for rehabilitation if all measures that isolate the TCs are lifted. If Varosha were handed over to UNFICYP, what would its status be?

13. (C) Speaking more generally, Apakan said the Cyprus settlement paradigm is changing -- the key is to look for a positive list of what can be accomplished, not play the old blame game. It would be particularly useful if Cypriot FM Lillikas and President Papadopolous would talk directly to Talat, not just through Turkish FM Gul. "Talat," Apakan stated, "is a very rare opportunity" who believes in settlement and in unification. If the two leaders could discuss elements of a substantive settlement, it would complement and reinforce other actions but was not, Apakan hastened to add, a pre-condition for other actions. He explained that the Finns had talked little with Talat and said the Turkish Cypriot leader must be part of any deal.

14. (C) Apakan had spoken with UN U/SYG Gambari while at UNGA. Viewing the Annan Plan as the culmination of many years of negotiations, the MFA has produced a survey of what has been agreed by the UN over the past two decades. Apakan referred to Gambari's intent to send letters to the two Cypriot leaders to jump-start the process on the island, but noted that their delivery has been delayed. With respect to the EU, Turkey's ship is sailing and the GOT will not let Cyprus be an obstacle or be used by others. Apakan asked for continued USG support, including as expressed by President Bush during his recent meeting with PM Erdogan, and thanked us for our work with European capitals.

15. (C) Ambassador responded that the President's views on Turkey and the EU were sincere. We want to ensure that Cyprus does not unduly affect Turkey's work with the EU, especially at the outset. The Finns are working hard to develop a package acceptable on both sides of the island that will ensure Cyprus isn't an undue barrier now with the EU and that will create room for the UN to re-engage. It is the

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only game in town and time is short. All the elements exist to create a political mess. The way to avoid the train wreck scenario is to work urgently with the Finnish proposal to defer the Cyprus problem for a couple of years. If there is no success and Turkey's attitude has been forward-leaning, the onus would be on the Greek Cypriots. Ambassador agreed that the Turkish Cypriots must be on board, but cautioned that the Finns' intent is to address a potential roadblock in Turkey's negotiations, not solve all the Turkish Cypriots' problems.

16. (C) EUR/SE Silliman added that in recent meetings in Brussels he had learned that the Finns had done considerable work preparing the ground with their European colleagues. They had implicitly linked the EU's Customs Union requirement (that Turkey open its ports and airports to the GCs) with Turkey's view on the need to lift the isolation of the TCs, a linkage very much in Turkey's favor. The Finns, having laid out a broad set of ideas, now count on the parties to come back to them with constructive ideas. The Turks can strengthen their hand through forward-leaning proposals. Apakan affirmed that he had received the same message and had informed FM Gul.

17. (C) Ambassador and Silliman reiterated that the USG would follow the process, supporting the parties and especially the Finnish effort. The door would be open to the very end, Apakan stressed. At this point, the GOT could not commit to every element of the Finnish package, but would not play a negative role.

18. (C) Comment: On departure for Luxembourg Monday, FM Gul said that the GOT could not accept resettlement of Varosha absent a comprehensive settlement, a position that leaves the door open for other variations. We will continue to urge that the Turks be forward-leaning. This is not about Talat or final settlement: it is about pushing Cyprus down the road, constructively, and getting past December with Turkey's EU candidacy intact.

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